



## CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Testimony before the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
March 11, 2014

Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Vijay Nair and I am president of the Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP), which represents over 3,100 full-time and part-time faculty, librarians, coaches, and counselors at CSU. CSU-AAUP is both a collective bargaining agent and a professional organization, affiliated with National AAUP, which works to advance academic freedom and shared governance. **I am here to testify in support of SB 402, *An Act Concerning Faculty Representation on the Board of Regents for Higher Education*.**

Collaboration and communication between board members, faculty, and students are vital for the success of any system such as ours. To quote from a report from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, “Faculty and trustees bring very different backgrounds, responsibilities, and skill sets to the table. Trustees, as fiduciaries, bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring sound financial decisions as well as sound academic quality, but most trustees have business backgrounds and few have ever worked in higher education. They are dependent upon the administration for leading and managing the institution and for the expert professional judgment of faculty in regard to curricula, degree requirements, and peer review...faculty participation in institutional governance isn’t a privilege, it’s a necessary part of decision-making in colleges and universities” (Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance, p.11).<sup>1</sup>

Many institutions allow faculty representation on their governing boards, including State University of New York, City University of New York, Colorado State University System, University of Florida, California State System, University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, Rutgers University, University of Cincinnati, and Cleveland State University. Most of these, including SUNY, also have faculty representation on committees of their governing boards.

At present the chairperson of the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) serves as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Board of Regents. So the faculty representation on the Board has to be either an FAC member from the Universities or an FAC member from the Colleges, but not both. SB 402 will provide for equal representation of faculty from both the Universities and the Colleges, as the positions of FAC chairperson and vice chairperson alternate between its members from these two systems. This is good policy. We support SB 402, but wish that it would also provide for faculty representation on the committees of the Board, other than on those that deal with personnel matters. Almost all of the planning and policy decisions of the Board of Regents are made in committees and we believe that meaningful participation of faculty in these

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<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, M., Skinner, R., & Bowen, Z. (2009). *Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

committees will benefit the Board, the institutions under it, and the public interest. There will be nothing to lose and much to gain. After all, ultimately it is the faculty who are responsible for educating our students. No one understands the realities of the classroom better than they.

**In conclusion, we believe that SB 402 is another step in the right direction and we thank you for raising it.** We believe that meaningful participation by the faculty in decision making is essential for the success of our system.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Vijay Nair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vijay" and the last name "Nair" clearly distinguishable.

Vijay Nair  
CSU-AAUP President